GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2869
ANSWERED ON:03.08.2016
South China Sea
Hegde Shri Anant Kumar Dattatreya;Kushwaha Shri Ram Kumar Sharma;Owaisi Shri Asaduddin;Rao (Avnthi) Shri Muthamsetti Srinivasa;Reddy Shri Ch. Malla;Roy Prof. Saugata

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has gone through the verdict by UN appointed International Court of Arbitration on Chinese claim of South China Sea and if so, the details thereof;

(b) the benefits or otherwise likely to be in India's favour in trade and other international relations;

(c) the extent to which the Indian economy especially oil exploration in South China Sea with cooperation with other strategic countries will benefit by the said move;

(d) whether the Chinese Media has claimed India's support against the decision of Court of Arbitration and if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the matter has been discussed with other Government concerned; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the response thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V.K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (c) The Tribunal constituted under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea issued a unanimous award in the arbitration instituted by the Republic of the Philippines against the People's Republic of China. It is a 501 page document divided into 10 chapters. It is available in public domain on the Permanent Court of Arbitration website at https://pca-cpa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/ 175/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Award.pdf.

South China Sea is a major waterway and over US$ 5 trillion trade passes through the sea lanes in this region. Over 55% of India's trade passes through South China Sea. Peace and stability in the region is of great significance to India. India undertakes various activities, including cooperation in oil and gas sector, with littoral states of South China Sea.

Government's position on this issue and the ruling is clear. The authority of Annex VII Tribunal and its award is recognized in Part XV of the UNCLOS itself. India's own record in this regard is well known. India supports freedom of navigation and overflight, and unimpeded commerce, based on the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the UNCLOS. India believes that States should resolve disputes through peaceful means without threat or use of force and exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that could complicate or escalate disputes affecting peace and stability. As a State Party to the UNCLOS, India urges all parties to show utmost respect for the UNCLOS, which establishes the international legal order of the seas and oceans.

(d) to (g) In view of the significance of this matter for international peace and stability, it has figured in various bilateral and multilateral meetings, most recently in the discussions between Raksha Mantri and the visiting Japanese Defence Minister and at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit, East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the ASEAN Regional Forum. The statements issued after these meetings have highlighted the importance of maintaining peace, stability, security and freedom of navigation and over-flight in the South China Sea. They have also emphasised the critical importance of confidence building measures, of refraining from the use or threat of force, and of disputes being resolved in accordance with principles of international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).